

Baker 1934 (NIDIFICATION vol. 3) does not mention Oriole as a foster parent of either of these cuckoos. Sálím Ali and Ripley 1969

(HANDBOOK 3) mention the Blackheaded oriole *Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis* as one of the host parents of Indian Cuckoo.

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12. LARGE RACKET-TAILED DRONGO AND COMMON BABBLER

On 8th December, 1979, a Large Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) was seen in company of the Common Babbler (*Turdoides caudatus*) in a grove of Casuarina (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) and Shisham (*Dalbergia sissoo*) in Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. The Drongo was actively catching flying insects but the Babbler was not observed to catch any insect.

I had not seen the drongo earlier, during five years of bird study. According to Whistler (1935) this species inhabits "the densest and dampest of the Indian forest, though it is also found in any well-wooded country and even comes into gardens". Ali (1977) says that it has a patchy distribution, more or less throughout India south of the Himalayas.

The Drongo which was seen in Aligarh was certainly a vagrant because it disappeared as quickly as it appeared. Two days of intensive search in and around the campus, especially

in the thickly-wooded Scindia Fort near the University, did not reveal any other specimen of this species. According to Ali (1977) the large Racket-tailed Drongo is commonly seen in hunting parties associated with Tree Pie and Jungle Babbler. However, it is difficult to explain the association of the Babbler with such a transient as this Racket-tailed Drongo. It is unlikely that the babbler migrated with the drongo because the Common Babbler is a resident species and moreover, it is mostly found in semi-arid and dry country unlike the Racket-tailed Drongo which prefers damp forests. The babbler in this case was alone with the drongo though normally it lives in flocks of a half dozen or more. It is remarkable that the Common Babbler made a deep though short-lived friendship with a vagrant which it (the babbler) must have met for the first time in life.

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WHISTLER, HUGH (1935): Popular Handbook of Indian Birds. (2nd edition) Gurney & Jackson, London.